

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR DECISION

**Title:** The CNPA's Role in Cultural Heritage

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### Purpose

The purpose of this paper to set out the CNPA's role related to the cultural heritage of the Park area and to provide a framework and actions for taking this forward.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board endorses the overall framework, tasks, guiding principles, strands and actions proposed in this paper for the CNPA's role in cultural heritage matters.

### Executive Summary

This paper defines cultural heritage and describes the wide range of interests involved in the sector. It is proposed that the CNPA should develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the cultural heritage of the Park area and put in place measures to conserve and enhance the cultural heritage in ways that contribute to the other aims of the Park.

Within this framework, a set of guiding principles is proposed to focus the CNPA's involvement in the sector and a series of actions are then proposed for the CNPA's role in cultural heritage under six main strands of work: Knowledge, Interpretation, Landscape, Language, Communities and Partnership.

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## THE CNPA'S ROLE IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

### Background

1. The purpose of this paper to clarify the CNPA's role with regards to cultural heritage issues and to set out a related plan of action.
2. This paper follows on from the discussion paper presented to the Board in June 2005 on 'The Role of the CNPA in Cultural Heritage'. That paper:
  - a) firstly, described the importance of cultural heritage to the aims of the Park;
  - b) secondly, outlined the CNPA's involvements with cultural heritage to date; and
  - c) thirdly, posed a number of broad, strategic questions for discussion by the Board.
3. This paper takes full account of the Board's discussion in June and the results of two meetings also held in June with external stakeholders to discuss the role of the CNPA in cultural heritage and obtain input on strategic objectives and actions for the Park Plan.
4. The Park Plan will set out the vision, strategic objectives and actions for cultural heritage in the Park at a broad strategic level. This paper outlines how the CNPA will take forward existing commitments and actions as well as outlining the types of role the CNPA will have in implementing the Park Plan.

### Discussion

#### Definitions and Roles

5. Cultural heritage is defined in this paper as including:-

*'structures and other remains resulting from human activity of all periods, language, traditions, ways of life and the historic, artistic and literary associations of people, places and landscapes'* (National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000)
6. This definition reflects the wide scope of cultural heritage interests, which are generally divided into two broad categories: the historic environment and the cultural activities and traditions associated with community life.
7. The historic environment and the working traditions that have shaped the environment and landscape over time include: the physical evidence of past human activity on the ground (archaeological sites and scheduled monuments, listed building, drove roads, military roads, railways) and the material evidence associated with the traditional working practices often found in local folk museums and heritage collections.
8. Cultural activities and traditions associated with community life include language and dialects, oral traditions and stories, literature music, dance, art, games and sports and are often associated with historic environment and working traditions. While these activities and traditions may have their roots in the past, they mostly continue to be

part of everyday community life and in part characterise and distinguish the area's local communities

9. The cultural heritage sector is correspondingly wide ranging with a large number of public, private, voluntary and community organisations and groups dealing with many different topics directly or indirectly at either a national, regional or local level.
10. In contrast to natural heritage there is no overarching national body for cultural heritage. However, various organizations have interests and statutory responsibilities to implement legislation and policy aimed at protecting, conserving and promoting cultural heritage. Public sector organisations involved in aspects of the Park's cultural heritage include: Local Authorities, The Scottish Arts Council, Sports Scotland, the Scottish Museums Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise. Historic Scotland, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage.
11. Local Authorities have a wide-ranging role with regard to cultural provisions, which include the arts, community recreation, heritage museums and historical records, libraries and information, parks and open spaces and sports. Planning departments are responsible for developing and implementing policies and development control measures to protect scheduled sites and monuments and listed buildings, and for designating conservation areas and developing and maintaining a sites and monuments record.
12. Historic Scotland is the principal executive agency that administers laws protecting ancient monuments and historic buildings and advises other bodies on the protection of the built heritage. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland is responsible for recording Scotland's historic sites, monument and buildings and promoting appreciation of them through the National Monuments Records of Scotland.
13. While natural heritage and cultural heritage are very closely related, as evidenced in the landscape, the cultural heritage sector is much less developed at present. However, there has been growing recognition over recent years of the importance of cultural heritage interests. This has also included recognition of the contribution that can be made to tackling a wide range of other issues such as; social justice and inclusion, community development and active citizenship, diversity, economic regeneration, lifelong learning and environmental improvements.
14. The breadth and scale of the cultural heritage sector emphasises the need for the CNPA to take a lead role in ensuring "*the coordinated and collective achievement of objectives that contribute to the four aims of the Park*" (National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000).

### **Cultural Heritage Framework**

15. Cultural Heritage is a specific part of the first aim of the Park "*to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Park*". It also has particular significance for the third and fourth aims as cultural heritage is an important part of

promoting *the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park*, and can also play major role in contributing to *the sustainable economic and social development* in the Park.

16. The wide scope of cultural heritage means that, like natural heritage, it is a cross-cutting theme across the CNPA's work. However, the importance of cultural heritage means that, as with the natural heritage, it is also an important strand of the CNPA's work in its own right.
17. Cultural heritage is integral to the statutory functions of the CNPA as a planning and access authority and to the wider work of the CNPA. The Park Plan and Local Plan are two of the principal mechanisms for implementing policy with regard to conserving and enhancing the cultural heritage of the Park, while other strategies and activities complement this. For example: development control and planning procedures, the Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Europarc Charter status, destination marketing activities, visitor management and the interpretation framework, land management practices and community development activity.
18. The CNPA's Corporate Plan only makes specific reference to cultural heritage under Goal 14 – "*Residents, businesses, organizations and visitors contribute to protection and enhancement of wildlife, landscapes, cultural heritage and natural resources*". However, cultural heritage considerations are implicit in a number of the other goals. For clarity, it is therefore proposed that, while the goals should remain unchanged, the CNPA should recognize two overall tasks for its involvement with cultural heritage:-
  - a) **to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the cultural heritage of the Cairngorms National Park area;**
  - b) **to put in place measures that conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and ensure that these contribute to the other aims of the Park;**
19. The CNPA needs to have a framework for progressing these tasks and it is proposed therefore that the CNPA adopts the following three guiding principles:-
  - a) **to concentrate on those aspects of cultural heritage that are unique and special to the Park area;**
  - b) **to use a community based approach to reflect cultural diversity and local distinctiveness within the Park area; and**
  - c) **to employ methods that encourage and exemplify good practice, partnership working and effective engagement.**
20. It has also to be recognised in promoting the cultural heritage that the culture and traditions of the communities within the Park can be linked not only with each other, but also to those of communities in surrounding areas irrespective of the administrative boundaries of the Park.
21. Considering the overall goal and guiding principles for cultural heritage, together with existing involvements, has lead to the identification of six main strands to the CNPA's current and developing role in cultural heritage:-
  - a) **Knowledge**
  - b) **Interpretation**
  - c) **Landscape**
  - d) **Language**
  - e) **Communities**
  - f) **Partnership**

## Strands

### Knowledge

22. The Park area has a very rich and diverse cultural heritage. At present, however, knowledge of that heritage is scattered in a wide range of sources and there has been no systematic attempt to identify key gaps in that knowledge.
23. Tackling this issue requires an understanding of the wide range of players in the sector and the information held by them, as part of developing knowledge of the Park area's cultural heritage under the two main headings of the historic environment and community life activities and traditions.
24. Auditing these cultural assets will help highlight their extent and diversity as well as identifying any common trends, for example building design and traditions, which might contribute to establishing a sense of Cairngorms identity.
25. **Action 1:** The CNPA should initiate with others a comprehensive audit of existing organisations, activities and events related to the cultural heritage of the Park area.
26. **Action 2:** The CNPA should compile with others an inventory of the historic environment of the Park spanning from individual sites, monuments and buildings to historic landscape scale interests.

### Interpretation

27. Knowledge of the Park's cultural heritage needs to be understood and made accessible. The key to achieving this is through the Park's Interpretation Framework, which identifies broad subject themes '*linking human activity to the landscape*' and '*celebrating the cultural diversity of the area*' and identifies specific actions including: '*raising awareness of culture and landscapes*' and '*developing information and interpretation on the cultural heritage*'.
28. Delivery of the Interpretation Framework also supports the Park's Sustainable Tourism Strategy, which under its objective 'Discovery and Distinctiveness' is committed to '*develop and maintain a wide range of opportunities for visitors to experience and enjoy the special qualities, distinctiveness and natural and cultural heritage of the Park*'.
29. **Action 3:** The CNPA will take forward the interpretation of cultural heritage through its work to implement the Interpretation Framework.

### Landscape

30. The landscape we see today for the most part is the result of human interaction with the environment over the last few hundred years but there is also visible evidence of human activity going back thousands of years.
31. Many elements of the historic environment receive some protection by being scheduled, listed or designated by various public sector bodies. However, such

schemes do not cover all elements and it appears that significant features of the historic environment could be at risk.

32. The features can include buildings and cultural landscapes of local significance, which planning and development controls may have limited scope to protect and which may fall outwith the funding available from existing sources.
33. Protective measures required may include requests for enhanced planning powers such as the designation of further conservation areas and the ability to serve Building Preservations Notices.
34. **Action 4:** The CNPA should carry out a review of elements of the historic environment that may be at risk and develop a range of appropriate mechanisms to increase the protection and support available for them in partnership with other bodies including: Historic Scotland, Local Authorities and communities.

### **Language**

35. The Gaelic language is integral to the Park area's cultural heritage and, with the other local linguistic traditions of Scots and Doric, an important priority.
36. In June 2004 the CNPA Board agreed to develop a Gaelic Language Plan for the Authority (Gaelic Language – Interim Policy 04/06/04)
37. Since then the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 has been passed. It is designed to promote the use of Gaelic, secure the status of the language and ensure it has a long-term future. It requires public bodies in Scotland to consider the need for a Gaelic language plan in relation to the services that they offer and establishes Bòrd na Gàidhlig as the statutory body to implement a National Gaelic Language Plan.
38. **Action 5:** The CNPA should develop in collaboration with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, a Gaelic Language Plan for the CNPA and investigate opportunities to also support the other local linguistic traditions.

### **Communities**

39. The local distinctiveness of communities in the Park is central to the area's cultural heritage. It is also fundamental to the sense of identity of these communities and has a key role to play in their wider social and economic development.
40. **Action 6:** The CNPA should continue to develop its community based cultural heritage grant scheme and provide additional assistance to support capacity building and networking between community based cultural heritage interests.

### **Partnership**

41. The growing interest in cultural heritage over recent years, has created a situation where there is both the need and opportunity for the CNPA to provide the cultural heritage sector with a new focus and momentum within the Park and adjoining areas.

42. **Action 7:** The CNPA should establish a Cultural Heritage Forum for the Park area involving key stakeholder interests to ensure good communication and coordination across the sector and assist in the development and implementation of the cultural heritage components of the Park Plan.
43. **Action 8:** The CNPA should host or co-host conferences and similar types of events about aspects of the Park's cultural heritage as part of developing the sector and raising overall awareness of the Park's cultural heritage. This could include an international conference of Europarc Charter Parks in 2007 to exchange information, good practice and celebrate the area's rich cultural heritage.

### **Recommendation**

44. **It is recommended that the Board endorses the overall framework, tasks, guiding principles, strands and actions set out in this paper for the CNPA's role in cultural heritage matters.**

### **Policy Context**

#### **Delivering Sustainability**

45. The development of the CNPA's role in cultural heritage through the objectives, principles and actions set out in this paper, will contribute to sustainability by improving the conservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage of the Park area.

#### **Delivering a Park for All**

46. The actions in this paper, including improved knowledge of the area's cultural heritage and a Park wide cultural heritage interpretation strategy, will contribute to the greater enjoyment and understanding of the area by all audiences.

#### **Delivering Economy, Effectiveness and Efficiency**

47. The role of the CNPA outlined in this paper will bring together all the main organisations and interests involved with cultural heritage in the Park area. This will encourage more co-ordination and joint working as well as better use of resources.

### **Implications**

#### **Financial Implications**

48. £40,000.00 is currently committed to the Cultural Heritage Grant Scheme for 2005/6 and 2006/7. The funding allocations for the remaining actions will be considered in developing the budget for the Corporate Plan and Operational Plan. It is anticipated that these other actions will require additional expenditure of £10-20,000.00 per annum of CNPA programme expenditure and that it will be necessary to draw in additional funds.

### **Presentational Implications**

49. The role identified in this paper for the CNPA in cultural heritage related matters will not be specifically promoted. However, implementation of the actions proposed will significantly improve the profile of the CNPA in the sector. This will result both from helping to give the sector a new focus and impetus, as well as from the more specific measures proposed.

### **Stakeholder Implications**

50. The proposed Cultural Heritage Forum and the community-based approach will both ensure involvement from a wide range of stakeholders.

### **Next Steps**

51. The Board will be updated quarterly through the Corporate Plan reports.

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